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OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

Letter dated 23 June 1997 from the Permanent Representatives
of Brazil, Germany, Singapore and South Africa to the United
Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We, the undersigned Permanent Representatives of Brazil, South Africa, Germany and Singapore to the United Nations, have the honour to convey to you the text of the joint initiative launched by our respective Heads of State and Government in New York on 23 June 1997 (see annex).

We would be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as an official document of the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 8.

(Signed) Celso Luiz Nunes AMORIM
Permanent Representative of Brazil

(Signed) Kiphusizi J. JELE
Permanent Representative of South Africa

(Signed) Tono EITEL
Permanent Representative of Germany

(Signed) Bilahari KAUSKAN
Permanent Representative of Singapore



ANNEX

**Declaration
by
Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Germany
President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Brazil
Deputy President Thabo M. Mbeki, South Africa
Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, Singapore**

**on the occasion of the Special Session
of the United Nations General Assembly
on 23 June 1997 in New York**

**Global Initiative On Sustainable Development
To Keep Alive the Spirit of Rio and to Create the Conditions for a Viable
Future for a Growing World Population**

Introduction

1. We, the Heads of State and Government of Brazil, Germany, Singapore and South Africa, have decided to launch this joint initiative as a contribution to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Five years have passed since the historic Earth Summit. Although significant progress has been made since Rio, much remains to be done. Poverty and environment degradation continue to affect the lives of millions of people in many parts of the world. Global warming, the loss of biological diversity, the spread of deserts, deforestation, the crisis in many of our cities remind us every day of the challenges which confront us. The unsustainable patterns of consumption and production continue to be the major cause of environment degradation worldwide. This is therefore not an occasion for complacency or mindless celebration. It is, however, also not an occasion for hand-wringing. We should use the occasion to recall the spirit of Rio, renew our commitments, and to redouble our efforts to conserve nature and to achieve sustainable development.

All countries must cooperate to protect the Earth's ecosystem and promote an international economic environment which is conducive to the implementation of Agenda 21. States have common but differentiated responsibilities. The industrialised countries, by virtue of their economic, technological and political resources bear a special responsibility to help solving global problems.

Meeting these challenges requires the provision of adequate financial resources for the implementation of Agenda 21, both from domestic and international sources. This presupposes increased bilateral and multilateral cooperation including transfer of technology, and private investments. We must increase the efficiency of our endeavours.

A United Response

2. The United Nations as the one truly universal international organisation has a significant role to play as we strive to face the twin challenges of sustainable development and environmental protection. The United Nations Charter should be amended to include sustainable development and in this context environmental protection as two of the purposes of the United Nations.

In the short term the United Nations Environment Programme should be reformed and strengthened to become the world's environmental conscience. In the medium term the establishment of a global environmental umbrella organization of the UN with UNEP as a major pillar should be considered.

We support the proposal that the Commission on Sustainable Development should continue to function as the lead forum for the Rio process. The Secretary-General should also give due account to the importance of sustainable development in his efforts to reorganise the UN Secretariat.

Implementing the Rio Conventions and Global Action to Protect Forests

3. We underscore the need for the parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change to complete their negotiations on a protocol which is effective in reducing greenhouse gas emissions when they meet for their third conference in Kyoto in December 1997.

We expect the Special Session to send a clear message to that conference to adopt a protocol which will require in a legally binding manner the industrialized countries to reduce individually or jointly the emissions of certain greenhouse gases (Carbon Dioxide, Methane, Nitrous Oxide) together by 15 % by 2010 and 10 % by 2005 based on 1990 levels. The protocol should also include concrete policies and measures. We recognize that in the longer term a truly global effort by all countries is needed, in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities, in order to move towards achieving the ultimate objective of the Convention.

4. We consider the wider ratification and full implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity indispensable. We must advance the current work on implementation, including traditional knowledge and equitable sharing of benefits, complete the negotiations on the biosafety protocol and initiate the creation of a network of protected areas with a large degree of biological diversity. In preserving the diversity of species, both protection and sustainable use should be mutually complementary.

We pledge our full support for the Convention to Combat Desertification, which entered into force in December 1996.

5. With regard to the ongoing deforestation and forest degradation worldwide we further stress common concern for the future of the world's forests. A joint solution to this problem by the international community is urgently necessary in order to meet the social, economic, ecological and cultural needs of present and future generations. In order to prepare a decision the Special Session of the General Assembly will have to discuss the options presented by the IPF and the 5th Session of CSD for further international action, including the elaboration of a global convention on forests. We call for the implementations of national and international strategies for the preservation and sustainable use of all forests.

New Initiatives

6. **Decade for the Sustainable Production and Use of Energy**

We emphasise the need for a joint strategy for the efficient production and rational use of energy and for the widespread introduction of renewable sources of energy, including solar energy and biomass. We encourage the World Bank and other international financial institutions to expand their programmes in this field. To promote international awareness of this very important issue, we recommend that the decade 2000 to 2010 should be proclaimed the „Decade for the Sustainable Production and Use of Energy“.

7. **Conference on Sustainable Urban Development**

We strongly believe that the international community must do all it can to ensure that our urban human settlements are sustainable so that we can safeguard the quality of life of our future generations. In the year 2000 more than three billion people - half of the world's population - will be living in

urban human settlements. We, therefore, commend the Federal Republic of Germany for offering to host a global conference in Berlin, in the year 2000, of the leaders of the world's 21 largest megacities, as well as representatives of some of the towns and cities considered exemplary within the meaning of Agenda 21. Our countries will also organise or support a series of regional symposiums to facilitate an exchange of information and promote the application of strategies and models for sustainable urban development. For urban populations in developing countries environmental degradation is often associated with poverty and lack of adequate access to safe drinking water, sewage and basic sanitation services. We support an international dialogue on freshwater to be conducted under the auspices of CSD.

8. Environmentally Acceptable Transport

We also note with great concern that traffic induced emissions all over the world are increasing drastically. Environmentally acceptable transport is indispensable to sustainable development. We recognize the need to phase out the use of leaded petrol as quickly as possible, to increase the availability of alternative fuels from renewable resources, and to whenever possible reduce car exhaust emissions. The CSD should promote global guidelines for environmentally sound transport with a view inter alia to expand local public transport systems, and whenever possible to switch transport from the road to rail and waterway, and to avoid unnecessary traffic.

9. Applying the Principle of Sustainable Development in All Areas

We realize that the principle of sustainable development will also have to be applied in numerous other areas apart from those stressed in this document. They include the need to promote a mutually supportive relationship between trade and environment, as well as sustainable tourism. They also include international measures to protect marine environment, including sustainable fisheries, and global efforts to safeguard water resources in order to meet mankind's basic needs and secure the development of not only urban but rural regions.

Conclusion

10. We represent four countries on four continents. We are a microcosm of the world. The fact that we are able to forge a partnership to launch this joint Initiative augurs well for the future. We urge all our partners at the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly to join us in the great enterprise of protecting the natural foundation of life and ensuring sustainable development. The future of our planet and humanity are at stake. We must not fail.
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